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THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY SPOTLIGHTS THE YOUTH VAPING EPIDEMIC FOR TOBACCO FREE FLORIDA WEEK

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MIAMI, FLA. – The federal government declared youth vaping, or e-cigarette use, a nationwide epidemic. In light of these concerns and the misinformation surrounding this topic, the Bureau of Tobacco Free Florida and the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County are helping educate parents, educators, pediatricians and partners on what they need to know about vaping and youth. This year's Tobacco Free Florida Week, April 22–28, is themed ***E-Epidemic: Vaping and Youth***.

In recognition of Tobacco Free Florida Week, local grantees participated in Florida International University's Health and Wealth Fair on April 23. The event was geared towards promoting healthier lifestyle changes, especially living tobacco free and nicotine free lives. In partnership with Miami Dade County Public Schools, local Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) clubs will also be sharing E-Epidemic: Vaping and Youth information and materials with their peers, faculty, staff and parents.

Here are the facts:

- Youth vaping has increased dramatically across the country and in Florida. In 2018, about 25% of Florida high school students reported current use of electronic vaping – a 58% increase compared to 2017.¹ In Miami-Dade County, 15.2% of high school students reported current use of electronic vaping in 2018.²
- Youth are vaping at much higher rates compared to adults. One in four Florida high school students are vaping.³ Only about 4% of Florida adults are vaping.⁴
- The long-term health effects of e-cigarettes are still unknown. E-cigarette devices heat a liquid – usually containing nicotine, flavorings, and other chemicals – and produce an aerosol. This aerosol, aka “vapor,” is NOT water. Some of the ingredients in e-cigarette aerosol could also be harmful to the lungs in the long-term, according to the CDC. For

example, some e-cigarette flavorings may be safe to eat but not to inhale because the gut can process more substances than the lungs.^{5,6}

- E-cigarettes typically contain nicotine, which is highly addictive.⁷ Youth may be more sensitive to nicotine and feel dependent on nicotine sooner compared to adults.^{8,9,10} According to the manufacturer, a single pod (the “liquid” refill) contains as much nicotine as a pack of 20 regular cigarettes.¹¹ E-cigarettes use nicotine salts, which can allow high levels of nicotine to be inhaled more easily and with less irritation.¹²
- The brain continues to develop until the early to mid-20s and the developing brain is more vulnerable to the negative effects of nicotine. The effects include reduced impulse control, deficits in attention and cognition, and mood disorders. Using nicotine in adolescence may also increase risk for future addiction to other drugs.¹³
- Evidence suggests that youth who use e-cigarettes may be at greater risk of starting to smoke regular cigarettes.^{14,15,16,17}

“The rise in youth vaping has become an alarming public health threat in Miami Dade County,” said Dr. Yesenia D. Villalta, Administrator/Health Officer for the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County. “The Tobacco Prevention and Control Program at the Florida Department of Health in Miami Dade County is committed to addressing local concerns and we want residents in the county to know that Tobacco Free Florida is a trusted resource for credible and accurate information about the youth vaping epidemic.”

Parents and educators should advise youth of the dangers of nicotine; discourage youth tobacco use in any form, including e-cigarettes; and set a positive example by being tobacco free themselves. Tobacco Free Florida is taking steps to educate Floridians about this troubling epidemic through social media campaigns and an educational blog post, which can be found at tobaccofreeflorida.com/eepidemic.

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About Tobacco Free Florida

The Florida Department of Health’s Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida’s tobacco settlement fund. Since the program began in 2007, more than 212,000 Floridians have successfully quit using one of Tobacco Free Florida’s free tools and services. There are now approximately 451,000 fewer adult smokers in Florida than there was 10 years ago, and the state has saved \$17.7 billion in health care costs.¹⁸ To learn more about Tobacco Free Florida’s Quit Your Way services, visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com or follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida or on Twitter at www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.

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- ¹ Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2018.
- ² Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2018.
- ³ Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2018.
- ⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health. BRFSS Prevalence & Trends Data [online]. 2017. [accessed Mar 29, 2019]
- ⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "Quick Facts on the Risks of E-cigarettes for Kids, Teens, and Young Adults." CDC Office on Smoking and Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. 3 Dec 2018. www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes-for-Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults.html (Accessed 11 March 2019)
- ⁶ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults. A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2016.
- ⁷ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults. A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2016.
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- ¹¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "E-cigarettes Shaped Like USB Flash Drives: Information for Parents, Educators and Health Care Providers." CDC Office on Smoking and Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. 18 Oct. 2018. www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/factsheet/index.html (Accessed 11 March 2019)
- ¹² CDC Newsroom Releases. "Sales of JUUL e-cigarettes skyrocket, posing danger to youth." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 2 Oct. 2018. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2018/p1002-e-Cigarettes-sales-danger-youth.html> (Accessed 8 March 2019)
- ¹³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults. A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2016.
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- ¹⁵ Miech R, Patrick ME, O'Malley PM, et al E-cigarette use as a predictor of cigarette smoking: results from a 1-year follow-up of a national sample of 12th grade students *Tobacco Control* 2017;26:e106-e111.
- ¹⁶ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2018. Public Health Consequences of E-Cigarettes. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/24952>.
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